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What is your weight-loss goal?

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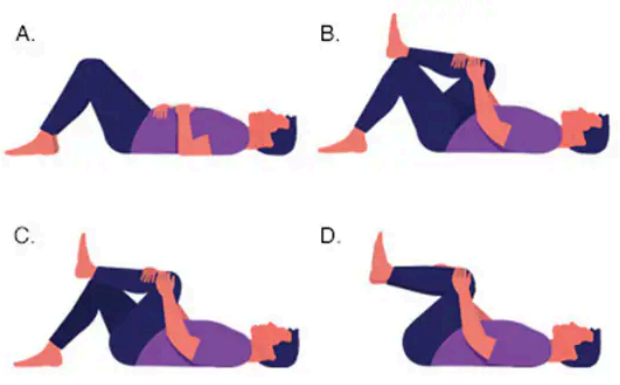
Back exercises in 15 minutes a day

Back pain is a common problem that many people deal with every day. Exercise often helps to ease back pain and prevent further discomfort. The following exercises stretch and strengthen the back and the muscles that support it.

When you first start, repeat each exercise a few times. Then increase the number of times you do an exercise as it gets easier for you. If you're beginning an exercise program due to ongoing back pain or after a back injury, talk to a physical therapist or another member of your health care team about activities that are safe for you.

Knee-to-chest stretch

Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor (A). Using both hands, pull up one knee and press it toward your chest (B). Tighten the muscles in your belly and press your spine to the floor. Hold for five seconds. Return to the starting position and repeat with the other leg (C). Go back to the starting position. Then repeat with both legs at the same time (D). Repeat each stretch 2 to 3 times. Do the full routine once in the morning and once in the evening if possible.



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Lower back rotational stretch

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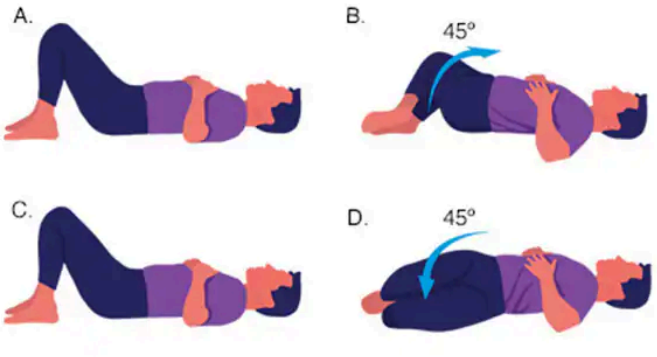
Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor (A). Keep your shoulders firmly on the floor, and slowly roll your bent knees to one side (B). Hold for 5 to 10 seconds. Slowly go back to the starting position (C). Repeat on the other side (D). Repeat each stretch 2 to 3 times. Do the full routine once in the morning and once in the evening if possible.



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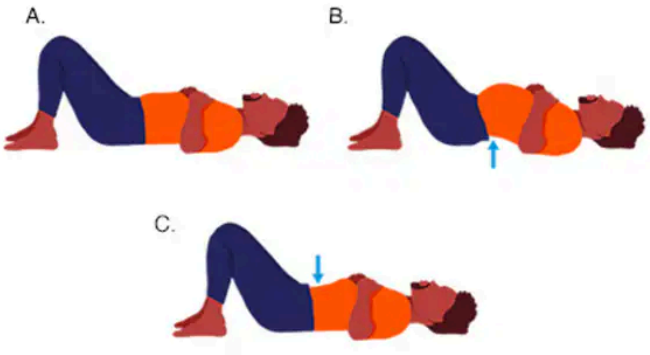
Lower back flexibility exercise

Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor (A). Tighten the muscles in your belly so that your lower back pulls up, away from the floor (B). Hold for five seconds and then relax. Flatten your back, pulling your bellybutton toward the floor (C). Hold for five seconds and then relax. Repeat. Start with five repetitions a day and slowly work up to 30.



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Bridge exercise

Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor (A). Keep your shoulders and head relaxed on the floor and tighten the muscles in your belly and buttocks. Then raise your hips to form a straight line from your knees to your shoulders (B). Try to stay that way long enough to take three deep breaths. Go back to where you started and repeat. Begin by doing five repetitions a day and slowly work up to 30.

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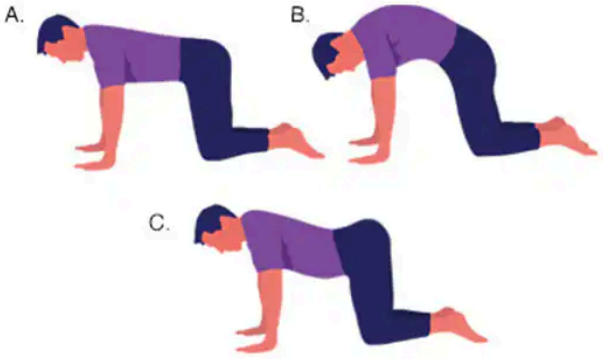
Cat stretch

Kneel on your knees and hands (A). Slowly arch your back, as if you're pulling your belly up toward the ceiling as you bring your head down (B). Then slowly let your back and belly sag toward the floor as you bring your head up (C). Go back to where you started (A). Repeat 3 to 5 times twice a day.



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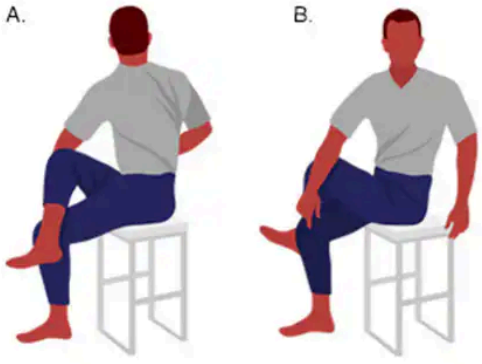
Seated lower back rotational stretch

Sit on an armless chair or on a stool. Cross your right leg over your left leg. Bracing your left elbow against the outside of your right knee, twist and stretch to the side (A). Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat on the opposite side (B). Do this stretch 3 to 5 times on each side twice a day.



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Shoulder blade squeeze

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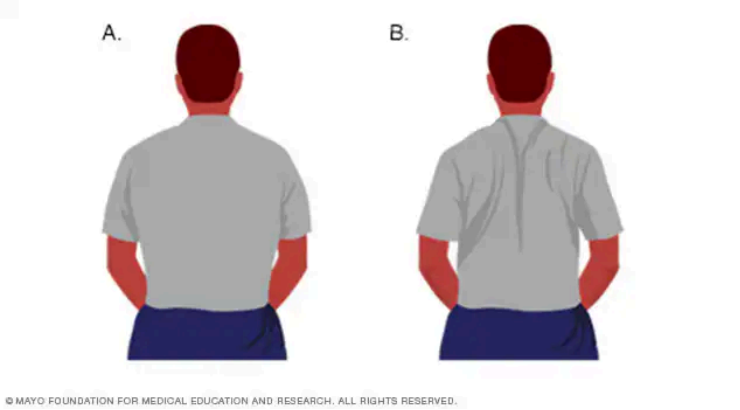
Sit on an armless chair or on a stool (A). While sitting up straight, pull your shoulder blades together (B). Hold for five seconds and then relax. Do this 3 to 5 times twice a day.



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